

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Offers Toy Safety Tips for the Holidays

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) encourages consumers to keep safety in mind when choosing toys for young children this holiday season, according to Diana Read, Injury and Violence Prevention Program director for the North Dakota Department of Health.

In 2007, about 170,000 toy-related injuries to children were treated in a hospital emergency room and about 18 children died as a result of accidents involving toys. Most of the deaths were associated with airway obstruction from small toys, drowning or motor vehicle accidents during play. Most of the injuries were cuts, bruises and abrasions. Injuries most commonly occurred on the head and face.

“Many of these injuries and deaths can be prevented by purchasing an age-appropriate toy,” said Read. “It’s also important that children are supervised while playing and parents should check to make sure toys have not been recalled.”

The Department of Health the CPSC offer the following tips to help avoid potential hazards during the holiday season and year round:

- **Magnets:** For children younger than 6, avoid building sets that have small magnets. If swallowed, serious injuries and/or death can occur.
- **Small Parts:** For children younger than 3, avoid toys with small parts that can cause choking.

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- **Scooters and other Ride-on Toys:** Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast and falls can be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be sized to fit the child and should be included with the gift.
- **Projectile Toys:** Projectile toys such as air rockets, darts and sling shots are for older children. Improper use of these toys can result in serious eye injuries.
- **Chargers and Adapters:** The use of batter chargers always should be supervised by adults. Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to children.

CPSC also recommends the following to help choose appropriate toys for children:

- Be a label reader. Look for toy labels that give age and safety recommendations and use that information as a guide.
- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Look for sturdy construction, such as tightly-secured eyes, noses and other potential small parts.
- For children younger than 8, avoid toys that have sharp edges and points.

The adults in the room also need to be careful once the gifts have been opened. Adults need to be aware of items that potentially could be dangerous to young children.

After unwrapping presents:

- Immediately discard plastic wrappings on toys before they become dangerous play things.
- Keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings or neighbors.
- Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers. Some chargers lack any device to prevent overcharging.

Read also reminds parents who shop online or at second-hand stores to make sure the toys they are purchasing have not been recalled or banned or don't meet current safety standards. Current information about toy recalls and other safety information can found on the CPSC website at www.cpsc.gov.

For more information, contact Diana Read, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2493 or 800.472.2286.

-- 30 --

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